



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

July 19, 2018

CN: 18-508

The Honorable Joni K. Ernst
United States Senate
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Ernst:

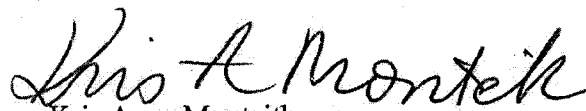
Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituent, Aureon Network Services regarding long-distance telephone companies withholding payment to rural carriers and reliable voice communications services to rural America. Your views are very important to me.

The Commission is committed to ensuring reliable telephone service in rural America. All Americans should have confidence that when a call is made to them, they will receive it, which often is not the case in rural America. To that end, on April 17, 2018, the Commission released a Rural Call Completion *Second Report and Order and Third Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, to adopt new measures and seek comment on others, both to better tackle the problem of call completion, and to implement the Improving Call Quality and Reliability Act of 2017 (RCC Act). The Commission's order addresses the problems that occur when calls originating from a long-distance provider are handed off multiple times to different providers—called intermediate providers—before reaching their final destination. The Commission found that this process is a significant source of rural call completion problems. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on rules to implement the RCC Act, which gives the Commission new authority to regulate intermediate providers. In taking these actions, the Commission is employing a multi-faceted approach requiring diverse solutions and aggressive action by all participants in the call completion process, to ensure that calls are completed to all Americans.

Regarding Aureon's claims, the Commission currently has several open proceedings regarding whether Aureon's past and current tariffed interstate rates are just and reasonable as required by the Communications Act. Commission staff is currently reviewing the record in those proceedings. Please be assured that the Commission is working as expeditiously as possible to address these issues.

I appreciate your interest in these matters. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kris A. Monteith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kris Anne Monteith

Bureau Chief

Wireline Competition Bureau